DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 054 488 CG 006 619

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TITLE The Defendant's Dilemma: Effects of Jurors' Attitudes and Authoritarianism on Judicial Decisions.

INSTITUTION Purdue Univ., Lafayette, Ind.

SPONS AGENCY National Science Foundation, Washington, D.C.

PUB DATE [71]

NOTE 19p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29

DESCRIPTORS *Attitudes; *Authoritarianism; Behavior; Bias; Class Attitudes; *Court Litigation; Courts; *Decision Making; Discriminatory Attitudes (Social); *Equal Protection

ABSTRACT

Two hypotheses are tested: (1) that attitude similarity between defendant and juror is positively related to decisions favoring the defendant; and (2) that juror authoritarianism is negatively related to decisions favoring the defendant. In a simulated jury situation, 139 subjects who were either high or low in authoritarianism responded to an accused defendant whose attitudes were either similar to or dissimilar from their own on 5 issues irrelevant to the case. The effects of attitude similarity and authoritarianism on judicial decisions were found to be more complex than hypothesized. Generally, and compared to equalitarians, authoritarians are less inclined to judge a similar defendant as guilty and more inclined to punish a dissimilar defendant severely. Discrepancies between these findings and those of other studies are discussed. The authors suggest important implications for the legal system in the fact that some jurors (equalitarians) are more immune to legally irrelevant information than are others (authoritarians). (TL)

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The Defendant's Dilemma: Effects of Jurors' Attitudes and Authoritarianism on Judicial Decisions[1]

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Legal practitioners have long been aware of the influence of psychological variables on judicial decisions. In 1933, Clarence Darrow declared that, "Jurymen seldom convict a person they like, or acquit one they dislike. The main work of the trial lawyer is to make a jury like his client, or at least to feel sympathy for him; facts regarding the crime are relatively unimportant." Jerome Frank (1950) labeled prejudice "the thirteenth juror." Lake (1954) instructs the lawyer that, "... casual reference to things people like, and avoidance of what they dislike, is always a safe policy. Deep seated prejudices that are unknown to you can be raised if a policy of caution is not followed." It may be a truism, but when such extra-legal and irrelevant variables affect judicial decisions, the objectivity and impartiality of the legal system is jeopardized.

Despite a long history of anecdotal and experimental evidence, only recently have systematic investigations of evaluative factors in the jury system been undertaken. In a landmark study involving 3,576 cases, Kalven and Zeisel (1966) found that the jury disagreed with the judge on almost a third of them; disagreements in part were attributed to juror's sentiments about the defendant. Among the specific variables which have been found to influence jury decisions are the defendant's race, sex, income, education, family status, and the prestige of his attorney (Broeder, 1965; Bullock, 1961; Nagel, 1969; Weld & Danzig, 1940). Behavioral studies of the jury system have dealt with variables such as severity of the crime (Walster, 1966), familiar versus novel arguments (Sears & Freedman, 1965), peer consensus about the law (Berkowitz & Walker, 1967), and

CG 006 619

the character of the defendant and the victim (Landy & Aronson, 1969). These various lines of investigation suggest strongly that evaluative variables do, in fact, influence the decisions of jurors.

One general framework for the study of evaluative responses has been the reinforcement model developed in a paradigmatic program of research on interpersonal attraction (Byrne, 1969, 1971; Byrne & Clore, 1970). Evaluative responses directed toward any stimulus are conceptualized to vary as a function of the amount of positive and negative affect associated with that stimulus. Among the stimuli utilized to manipulate affect have been similar and dissimilar attitudes (Byrne, 1961), temperature (Griffitt, 1970), movies (Byrne & Clore, 1967; Gouaux, in press), ratings of the subject's creativity (Griffitt & Guay, 1969), personal evaluations (Byrne & Ervin, 1969), overcrowding (Griffitt & Veitch, 1971), and erotic stimuli (Byrne & Lamberth, 1971). Among the evaluative responses found to be influenced by such manipulations are interpersonal attraction and ratings of intelligence, knowledge, morality, and adjustment (Byrne, 1961), desirability as a date (Byrne, Ervin, & Lamberth, 1970), votes for a political candidate (Byrne, Bond, & Diamond, 1969), hiring decisions (Griffitt & Jackson, 1970; Merritt, 1970), and decisions about pornography and its legal restrictions (Byrne & Lamberth, 1971). This body of research suggests that the attraction of a juror toward a defendant would be influenced by any variable which influences affect, including the attitudes of the defendant. It would be expected that attraction would, in turn, influence decisions concerning guilt and innocence. If the defendant is judged to be guilty, decisions concerning the severity of punishment should reflect these same influences.

In addition to the proposed relationship between the juror's liking for the defendant and subsequent decisions about him, previous research suggests the importance of personality variables

in the courtroom situation (Hatton, Snortum, & Oskamp, 1971; Kalven & Zeisel, 1966; Lipsitt & Strodtbeck, 1967; Strodtbeck, James, & Hawkins, 1957). One personality variable which would seem to be especially relevant is authoritarianism (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950). Individuals scoring high on the F Scale are described as being rigid and intolerant and as having the tendency to condemn, reject, and punish those who violate conventional values. The prejudicial aggression and punitiveness of authoritarians has been well documented (Epstein, 1965, 1966; Roberts & Jessor, 1958; Sherwood, 1966; Thibaut & Riecken, 1955). On the basis of these theoretical and empirical considerations, it would be expected that individuals high in authoritarianism would be more likely to find a defendant guilty and would sentence a guilty defendant more severely than would individuals low in authoritarianism.

Specifically, then, the present experiment is designed to test the hypotheses that (a) the similarity of attitudes between a juror and a defendant is positively related to judicial decisions favoring the defendant and (b) the authoritarianism of a juror is negatively related to judicial decisions favoring the defendant.

Method

Subjects for the experiment were 139 introductory psychlogy students (64 males, 75 females) at Purdue University. Early in the semester a 32-item attitude survey was administered in order to assess the subjects' views on a series of topics. Each item was arranged in a six-point format, and the topics covered a wide variety of issues from the necessity of war to attitudes about gardening. From the pool of items, five topics were selected for use in the jury simulation experiment. These five topics were attitudes concerning the college fraternity system, college students drinking, emphasis on the social aspects of college life, belief in God, and the American way of life.

Each experimental session was conducted in class sections of 20 to 30 subjects each. Each student was given a six-page booklet containing instructions, a description of the case, and a questionnaire dealing with the subject's opinions concerning the case and the defendant involved. The cover page of the booklet contained the following instructions:

> This study is concerned with the nature of decision making and its relationship to an appeals system for students charged with violations of university regulations. The first part of this study entails reading a summary of an actual case taken from the files of the Dean of Men's office of the University of Toledo. The summary contains a complete description of the violation committed and of the student involved. Names of the participants have been changed. Similarly, several transcripts have been retyped to leave out confidential information. The second part of this study requires completion of a questionnaire (attached) concerning your opinions about this case.

The defendant was described as a junior in the college of Arts and Sciences, and was charged with the theft of an examination from a departmental duplicating office. The following description of the incident was recorded in the booklet:

> On Tuesday, November 12, 1969, Mrs. Sarah Dinesmore, a secretary in the Department of English, was working in room 247 of Kinsleen Hall. This room, commonly referred to as the duplicating room, is used almost exclusively for the preparation of course materials, such as handouts and tests. On this particular day Mrs. Dinesmore was mimeographing copies of an English 212 examination which was to be administered the following morning. At 2:30 that afternoon she took her regular coffee break with several other secretaries. Room 247 was left unattended and unlocked for approximately 15 minutes. As she returned

to the room, she observed a student (later identified as William Davidson) walk out of the room, place a number of folded papers in his pocket, and begin walking rapidly toward a stairway. Suspecting that copies of the examination may have been taken, Mrs. Dinesmore ran to the office of Dr. Robert Hossenger, assistant chairman of the department, and reported the incident to him. Together, they pursued the student and overtook him just outside the building. A copy of the English 212 examination was found in his possession. It was later determined that he was enrolled in the course.

This description of the incident leading to the Dean of Men's hearing was followed by a 'Personal Data' description of the defendant. This description of the defendant contained information about the defendant's position on the five attitudinal topics which were manipulated in this study. The actual statements concerning these attitudes were changed for each subject, so that the subject-jurors were presented with a defendant with whom they were in complete agreement on all five attitudinal topics or in complete disagreement. In order to accomplish the necessary conditions of attitude similarity (0% or 100%) with each subject, 44 different combinations of specific statements about these topics were employed in the experiment. An example of these descriptions is given below:

> William Davidson is a junior in the College of Arts & Sciences, and currently holds a grade point average of 2.68 (4.00 = A). His academic records show that he has never been placed on academic probation. When questioned about Bill's activities, his dormitory counselor stated that Bill is not a member of a fraternity, nor did he seem to be enthusiastic about the fraternity system in general. He also stated that Bill did not seem to emphasize the social aspects of college and is not in favor of college students drinking. He was described by his roommate

in the dormitory as a person with a firm belief in God, and a negative opinion concerning the American way of life. His records show no evidence of past disciplinary problems.

Following the personal description of the defendant was the following statement made by the defendant at the hearing:

"Dr. Howell sent me to the duplicating room to pick up a copy of an article for a course I was in. When I got there no one was around, so I went in to find the article myself. While I was looking for the article, I found a copy of the test I was going to take the next day. I had been studying for that test for a week, and I was really worried about it. I just impulsively picked up the test and walked out with it."

Following this description of the hearing, each subject-juror was asked to fill out a four-item questionnaire concerning his opinions about the case. The first item asked the subject to rate the degree of certainty with which he felt the defendant to be guilty. This item was in the form of a seven-point scale, ranging from "I feel that the defendant is definitely guilty" (scored as 7) to "I feel that the defendant is definitely not guilty" (scored as 1). Following the ratings of the defendant's guilt, each subject was asked to give his recommended punishment for the defendant. The nine possible punishments were: dismissal of the case (scored as 1), warning, reprimand, social probation, one week suspension, one month suspension, semester suspension, year suspension, and permanent expulsion (scored as 9).[2] After determining the severity of punishment, each subject was asked to indicate how he felt personally about the defendant. This information was assessed on a 14-point scale, ranging from "extremely negative" (scored as 1) to "extremely positive" (scored as 14). This scale was used as a measure of the subject's attraction toward the defendant. Finally, the subject-jurors were asked to evaluate the defendant's morality. This evaluation was made on a seven-point scale ranging from "highly immoral" (scored as 1) to "highly moral" (scored as 7).

After completing the experiment, the subjects were given a 22-item acquiescence-free version of the authoritarianism scale, as used by Byrne and Lamberth (1971). This scale was administered by the subjects' instructors during the week following the experiment. The subjects were not aware, at the time of administration, of the relationship between this scale and the jury simulation experiment. After the authoritarianism data were collected, the experimenter discussed the study with the subjects, explaining its purpose.

In addition to the two levels of attitude similarity, subjects were dichotomized into authoritarian ($\underline{M}$ = 84.97) and equalitarian ($\underline{M}$ = 60.42) subgroups by division at the F Scale sample mean of 72.22. Thus, there was a 2 by 2 factorial design with cell sizes ranging from 31 to 39.

Results

The means of the four dependent variables are shown in Table 1; analysis of variance was computed for each. With respect to

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Insert Table 1 about here

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certainty of the defendant's guilt, neither main effect was significant, but there was a highly significant interaction between similarity and authoritarianism ($\underline{F}$ = 8.54, $\underline{df}$ = 1/135, $\underline{p}$ <.004). Tests of simple main effects, using the Newman-Keuls procedure (Winer, 1971), were applied to the data in order to describe the interaction more accurately. It was found that in the similar attitude condition the authoritarians were less certain of the defendant's guilt than were the equalitarians ($\underline{p}$ <.05).

The subjects' recommended severity of punishment yielded significant effects for attitude similarity ($\underline{F}$ = 7.68, $\underline{df}$ = 1/135, $\underline{p}$ <.007), authoritarianism ($\underline{F}$ = 3.66, $\underline{df}$ = 1/135, p = .054), and the interaction ($\underline{F}$ = 5.29, $\underline{df}$ = 1/135, $\underline{p}$ <.02). Post hoc

comparisons of cell means revealed that the authoritarians in the dissimilar condition recommended more severe punishment for the defendant than did the subjects in the remaining three conditions ($p < .01$).

On the attraction variable, both attitude similarity ($F = 26.30$, $df = 1/135$, $p < .0001$) and authoritarianism ($F = 22.19$, $df = 1/135$, $p < .0001$) yielded significant effects, while the interaction failed to do so.

Only attitude similarity ($F = 51.44$, $df = 1/135$, $p < .0001$) had a significant effect on morality ratings. Authoritarianism ($p < .08$) and the interaction ($p < .06$) only approached significance.

Discussion

The effects of attitude similarity and authoritarianism on judicial decisions were found to be more complex than originally hypothesized. There was an interactive effect of these two variables on both certainty of guilt and severity of punishment. Since the defendant in this case clearly admits his guilt, any response other than that which indicates the defendant as definitely guilty must be considered as a deviation from the facts. It appears that an authoritarian presented with a similar, and therefore better liked, defendant shows a bias in the defendant's favor. An equalitarian in the identical situation fails to show this bias. The influence of the irrelevant factor of attitudes on the judgments of authoritarians is even more salient with respect to recommended punishments than with decisions about guilt. Both main effects were significant, but further analysis indicated that the major contributors were the authoritarians in the dissimilar condition; they were significantly more severe in their recommended punishments than were the subjects in the other three conditions. Compared to equalitarians, then, authoritarians are less inclined to judge a similar defendant as guilty and more inclined to punish a dissimilar defendant severely.

The indicated differences between authoritarians and equalitarians are even more striking when the relationships among the dependant variables are examined. In Table 2 are shown the intercorrelations of the four dependent variables separately for the

Insert Table 2 about here

high and low authoritarian subjects. The coefficients were computed within attitude similarity conditions and then averaged.[3] For the authoritarian subjects, attraction and their evaluation of the defendant's morality are significantly related to both the guilt and punishment variables. In contrast, for the equalitarians, neither attraction nor morality are significantly related to either of the judicial decisions. Thus, in both groups, attitude similarity is found to affect evaluative responses, but the equalitarians did not allow this reaction to influence their judicial decisions.

Despite the fact that 44 different attitudinal descriptions of the defendant were employed in order to match each subject to the defendant in perfect agreement or disagreement of these five topics, some descriptions were used more often than others. In fact, because of their commonality, three of the descriptions were employed for 49 of the 139 subjects. In order to assure that the subjects were responding to attitudinal similarity-dissimilarity and not the commonality versus deviancy of the defendant's opinions, these descriptions were separated from the less common descriptions and analyzed for their affect on each of the four dependant measures. If subject-jurors were responding to commality versus deviancy of the defendant's opinions, one would expect greater perceived guilt and harsher punishments for those defendant's disagreeing with commonly held views than for those disagreeing with less common opinions.[4] The analyses of all four dependent measures indicated no effect of agreement or disagreement with common or uncommon attitudinal positions ascribed to the defendant ($F < 1$ in all cases).

The effect of attitude similarity on attraction, was not surprisingly, highly significant. The effect of authoritarianism

on attraction was, however, a considerable surprise considering earlier findings of no relationship between the two variables (Byrne, 1965) even when authoritarian-relevant attitudes are used (Sheffield & Byrne, 1967). How can one account for these contradictory findings? The possibility was raised that authoritarians do, in fact, respond more strongly to attitude similarity-dissimilarity than equalitarians; the previous findings were collected over half a decade ago at the University of Texas and may not be generalizable to the present time or place. It would be extremely interesting if there have been sufficient societal changes in polarization since the earlier research to bring about a new relationship between liberalism-conservatism and the similarity-attraction relationship. In any event, a study was undertaken to test this possibility. The same 22-item balanced F Scale and a 48-item attitude scale were administered to several sections of the introductory psychology course at Purdue University. Two months later, 57 subjects (38 males, 19 females) took part in a standard similarity-attraction experiment (Byrne, 1969) in which they were exposed to a 48-item attitude scale (purportedly filled out by another student) simulated at .20, .50, or .80 proportion of similar attitudes. The subjects were further divided into authoritarians ($\underline{M}$ = 87.37) and equalitarians ($\underline{M}$ = 60.96). The similarity variable once again was found to have a significant ($\underline{p}$ <.02) effect on attraction, but neither authoritarianism nor the similarity-authoritarianism interaction approached significance. Thus, the Texas findings were replicated, and a different explanation for the inconsistent findings was necessarily sought.

A more probable explanation would seem to be that the effects of authoritarianism on evaluative responses are elicited only by specific situations, and that broad transituational generality should not be expected (Byrne, in press; Mischel, 1968; Sarason & Smith, 1971). The trial setting with a socially acceptable target plus the affect-eliciting attitudinal information evoke

quite different responses in authoritarians and equalitarians whereas a simple attitude-attraction task does not. One question raised by this conceptualization is whether the trial situation alone is sufficient to bring about authoritarianism effects. To answer this question, another study was conducted in which the procedures of the original experiment were replicated except that the attitudinal information was omitted. A group of 64 introductory psychology students (37 males, 27 females) at Purdue University took part in the simulated trial experiment. They were again dichotomized into authoritarians ($\underline{M}$ = 84.07) and equalitarians ($\underline{M}$ = 60.08). Analysis of variance indicated no effect of authoritarianism on any of the four dependent variables ($\underline{F}$ <1 in each instance). Thus, neither the manipulation of attitude similarity alone nor the trial situation alone is sufficient to evoke the authoritarian reaction which is found to be quite strong when the two are combined. It is interesting to speculate that had the authoritarianism-trial experiment been conducted first, it is unlikely that this particular personality variable would have been included in the original authoritarianism-attitudes-trial experiment. There would seem to be danger in extrapolating from onesimple experimental situation to a more complex experimental situation with respect to the effects of personality variables. This series of experiments points not only to the futility of conceptualizing personality traits as broadly transituational and general in nature, but also demonstrate the ease with which seemingly general trait consistant behaviors disappear when rather simple changes in the situation occur.

Obviously, the simulated jury technique employed in this investigation is not an exact duplication of the situation in which genuine jurors are involved in actual trials. Some comfort about the comparability of the laboratory and the "real world" is provided by the correspondence between experimental findings and the correlational and descriptive data gathered in legal settings.

One procedural difference which might be noted is that our subject-jurors were not permitted to interact and deliberate before reaching their decisions. The gravity of such a limitation is reduced by the findings of Kalven and Zeisel (1966). They report, in an extensive study of over 3,500 cases in the Chicago Jury Project, that 90% of these cases are decided by members of the jury before they deliberate.

The results of the present study, and of others reported here, could have important implications for the legal system. Most notably, the constitutional guarantee of trial by a jury of peers takes on added importance. Attitudes have long been recognized to be relatively homogeneous within class strata. The relationship between economic status, occupation, and demographic variables and attitude homogeneity has also been firmly established. Considering the findings of the present research, trial by a jury of attitudinally similar peers versus attitudinally dissimilar nonpeers could well result in quite different verdicts. Peership may require narrow and specific definition. It is impossible to imagine a trial, from a simple traffic violation to the dramatic case of the Chicago 7, in which there is not an expression of the defendant's attitudes or in which attitudes could not be inferred from variables such as dress, age, sex, race, manner of speech, or whatever. The fact that some jurors, such as the equalitarians in our experiment, are more immune than others to legally irrelevant information might point the way toward a means whereby the legal system could attain greater objectivity.

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Footnotes

[1]This research was supported in part by Research Grant GS-2752 from the National Science Foundation.

[2]These nine possible punishments were developed from a list of eleven disciplinary judgments used by universities in such hearings. The original eleven dispositions were ranked by 60 undergraduates; the items "monetary fine" and "academic probation" were excluded from the alternatives because of their high variance among the undergraduate judges.

[3]This procedure eliminates the effects of the attitude similarity variable on each response and permits a nonconfounded examination of the effects of authoritarianism on the interrelationships.

[4]While such differential judicial decisions might have served to weaken the theoretical interpretation of these results, it would not lessen the importance of the findings in terms of their significance for the legal system. A judicial decision based on such factors as perceived deviancy (or dissimilarity) is in direct violation of the constitutional guarantees of "due process" and "equal protection of the law" as stated in the 14th admendment. These rights according to Supreme Court Justice Black (Chambers vs. Florida, 1940) are "planned and inscribed for the benefit of every human being subject to our Constitution-of whatever race, creed, or persuasion."

Table 1

Mean Responses of Authoritarian and Equalitarian Jurors on Certainty of Guilt, Severity of Punishment, Attraction, and Morality toward a Defendant with Similar or Dissimilar Attitudes

	Proportion of Similar Attitudes	
	.00	1.00
Certainty of Guilt		
Authoritarians	6.08	5.55
Equalitarians	5.81	6.28
Severity of Punishment		
Authoritarians	5.13	3.58
Equalitarians	3.84	3.69
Attraction		
Authoritarians	5.74	8.42
Equalitarians	8.26	9.58
Morality		
Authoritarians	3.33	4.91
Equalitarians	3.97	4.89

Table 2

Intercorrelations of the Four Dependent Variables for Authoritarians and Equalitarians

Authoritarians (N = 72)

	Certainty of Guilt	Severity of Punishment	Attraction
Severity of Punishment	.27*		
Attraction	-.37***	-.32***	
Morality	-.29**	-.33***	.63***

Equalitarians (N = 67)

Severity of Punishment	.15		
Attraction	-.09	-.18	
Morality	.08	-.11	.53***

* p <.05

** p <.01

*** p <.005